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**NEW COHORT OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE LEADERS SELECTED FOR  
2017-2018 REDF ACCELERATOR**

*Eighteen employment-focused social enterprise leaders will turbocharge their learning and deepen their connections by being part of the REDF Accelerator*

SAN FRANCISCO (September 14, 2017) –Today [REDF](#) announced its 2017-2018 [REDF Accelerator](#) cohort comprised of emerging leaders from employment-focused social enterprises from ten states. The selected 18 fellows manage competitive, revenue-generating businesses with a social mission: they hire and provide training to people who are striving to overcome employment barriers including homelessness, incarceration, substance abuse, mental illness, and limited education. These entrepreneurial leaders will receive training from experts on core business competencies and employee support programs while building a powerful peer network.

This year's cohort includes social enterprises from across the United States—including several first-time regions for REDF—with a broad range of goods and services represented, from cafés and restaurants to consumer goods and home improvement.

“Now in its second year, our Accelerator program is the first of its kind created to develop the future leaders of the employment social enterprise field on a national scale,” says Carla Javits, REDF CEO and President. “As we work to build the field nationally, ensuring that these talented and dedicated men and women are equipped with the tools, skills, and networks they need to grow their businesses and offer more people the opportunity to work and contribute is key. We know the need is great.”

[Recent research](#) conducted by the American Enterprise Institute estimates that 9.6 million adults and “disconnected youth,” all of whom are not working, face barriers that social enterprise jobs are tailor-made to address. Accelerator fellows will delve into comprehensive content designed specifically to help them grow their businesses to meet this need.

“I was beyond excited to be accepted into the REDF Accelerator,” says Lisa Miccolis, Founder and Executive Director of The Monkey & The Elephant. “Personally, I am looking forward to many aspects of the program; from the dedicated learning and skill building in marketing, financial planning, and leadership to the opportunity to be among peers, learning from them and gaining a network of support from others in the social enterprise and transitional employment industry. Organizationally, I am thrilled to be able to immediately apply what I am learning to grow The Monkey & The Elephant in a strategic and sustainable way.”

In addition to supporting sustainable growth and facilitating valuable peer-to-peer assistance for participants, the program is created to help leaders better serve individuals most in need of another chance in life.

“I am inspired by the women of the community I serve and by the endless possibilities REDF continues to bring to so many lives,” says Joe Altepeter. “I know my role of providing leadership and vision for the Downtown Women’s Center social enterprise, MADE by DWC, will be strengthened through this program as we explore creative approaches to scale our impact.”

Meet the 2017-2018 REDF Accelerator cohort:

### **East Coast**

- Eli Allen, [Civic Works EnergyReady](#), Baltimore, MD
- Keith Cooper, [Beautiful Day](#), Providence, RI
- Lisa Miccolis, [The Monkey & The Elephant](#), Philadelphia, PA
- Toby Sheppard-Bloch, [Intervine](#), Bronx, NY

### **Midwest**

- Kelly Farley, [Rebuilding Exchange](#), Chicago, IL
- Julia Rhodes, [Rebel Nell](#), Detroit, MI

### **South**

- Kirsten Ham, [Clean Slate](#), Fort Worth, TX
- Lisa Stetar, [Crossroads Pets](#), Nashville, TN

### **West**

- Cheryl Cook, [The Rock Found](#), Greeley, CO
- Susan Williams, [Infinitely Simple](#), Boulder, CO

### **West Coast**

- Joe Altepeter, [MADE by DWC](#), Los Angeles, CA
- Anthony Armour, [Neighborhood Industries](#), Fresno, CA
- Kevin Madrigal, [Farming Hope](#), South San Francisco, CA
- Emma Rosenbush, [CALA](#), San Francisco, CA
- Angie Smith, [Homeless Garden Project](#), Santa Cruz, CA
- Teresa Smith, [Eat Better Today](#), San Diego, CA
- Jonathan Thompson, [The Good Seed CDC](#), Los Angeles, CA
- Nilda Valmores, [My Sister's Café](#), Sacramento, CA

For more information, visit <http://redf.org/redf-accelerator/>.

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### **ABOUT REDF**

REDF (the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund) is a pioneering venture philanthropy that creates jobs and transforms lives like no other organization in America. We are leading a national movement of employment social enterprises—revenue-generating businesses that invest the money they make into helping people striving to overcome employment barriers get jobs, keep jobs, and build a better life.